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AUTHOR Katchen, Johanna E.
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ABSTRACT

The paper describes activities incorporating literature, music, and cultural material that are used with foreign language majors at National Tsing Hua University (Taiwan) and makes suggestions for their use in the pronunciation class. Even at advanced levels, Asian students of English as a second language (ESL) have difficulty with English pronunciation. Although many students can pronounce the sounds in isolation, they need practice with connected speech for fluency at and beyond the sentence level. A poem may help students feel the stress patterns and rhythm of English. A short prose reading gives practice in sentence intonation, while an excerpt from a speech allows the student to focus on phrase intonation, stress, or voice quality. A song calls for very careful diction, and tongue twisters challenge everyone's fluency. (Author/MSE)

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MASTERING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION THROUGH LITERATURE

Johanna E. Katchen
Associate Professor
Department of Foreign Languages
National Tsing Hua University
Hsinchu, TAIWAN, R.O.C.

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The Japan Association of Language Teachers
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Johanna E. Katchen
Department of Foreign Languages
National Tsing Hua University
101 Kuang Fu Road, Section 2
Hsinchu, Taiwan, R.O.C.
Office (035) 718657
Home (035) 720149

Abstract

MASTERING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION THROUGH LITERATURE

Even at advanced levels, Asian students often have serious problems with English pronunciation. How can these skills be taught in a way that both students and teachers find stimulating? Although many students can produce the proper sounds in isolation, they need practice with connected speech, in fluency at the sentence level and beyond. A poem may help students feel the stress patterns and rhythm of English; a short prose reading gives practice in sentence intonation; an excerpt from a speech occasions a focus on phrase intonation, emphasis, or voice quality. A song calls for very careful diction. And tongue twisters challenge everyone's fluency! These activities also add variety and interest to the class. This paper explains some activities incorporating literature, music, and cultural material that are used with foreign language majors at National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, R.O.C., along with suggestions for their use in the pronunciation class.

MASTERING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION THROUGH LITERATURE

(This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Fifth Conference on English Language Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China, May 21, 1988, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, R.O.C. entitled "A pronunciation course that goes beyond linguistics.")

Introduction and Background

Does this situation sound familiar? You have an advanced class of students whose grammar, reading, and listening comprehension are adequate for their level, but whose spoken English is sometimes almost incomprehensible without correct teacher anticipation of the content. That is, as teachers, we normally understand our students' attempts at English better than the layman because we have more practice in decoding fractured English and we often structure the learning situation so that we know approximately what the student will or should say even before he says it. It is when we confront our students outside these anticipated exchanges, for example, when the student calls his teacher on the telephone or happens to see her downtown, that we really discover whether the student is comprehensible.

It has long been recognized that Asian students in particular have difficulty with the sound patterns of English. At beginning levels, we may have to teach new sounds and distinctions not present in the student's native language such as [θ] and [ð], which are rare in the world's languages, or [r] and [l], allophones of which do exist in Standard Mandarin and Japanese, but in English they are phonemic and have different allophonic distributions. At advanced levels, most students may have mastered all the new English sounds in isolation, but they

have trouble with connected speech. For example, Japanese and Chinese have basically open syllables (Mandarin does permit syllables to end in n, ŋ, and r). These students often add ə to break up clusters of two, three, or more consonants in English. They may also have trouble with stress, syllable timing, and intonation patterns. At this level, more practice with sounds and words in isolation accomplishes little, and even the repetition of isolated sentences has limited value and is, quite frankly, boring to students whose passive English skills are upper intermediate or advanced.

It has been noticed that those students labelled poor pronouncers are often those who lack confidence in their spoken English ability. Some of these are mumblers. This is a common strategy, even among American children when the teacher calls on them and they aren't sure of the answer: they speak in a low voice to the book or to the floor, hoping the teacher will somehow hear the right answer instead of the wrong one. Others seem to lack the fluency to complete even a short, one clause sentence at near native speed, rhythm, and intonation, even if just repeating after the teacher or the tape. They even have difficulty reading a simple passage aloud. Still others may be fairly fluent but have specific difficulties with, for example, certain consonant clusters or intonation patterns. In a class of this type, what can be done to improve students' pronunciation and fluency in spoken English without seeming to be a boring drill?

A first thought might be to use the communicative activities we give the students for other purposes. Although occasional comments on student errors are part of the teacher's work, we must remember that interrupting content to comment on form disrupts and destroys communication. It is often hard enough to get Asian students to speak in class, and too much interruption and correction may make them lose face and cause them to become quiet and afraid to speak again. Besides, we should not confuse our students and ourselves by mixing objectives. Is the purpose of the activity practice of a communication skill (e.g., asking/giving directions, making apologies), grammar review, or pronunciation practice? Especially at advanced levels, it can only be helpful to tell the students the purpose of an activity and what we expect them to learn from it. While we can use communicative activities to diagnose and evaluate progress of student pronunciation, pronunciation practice should be labelled as such, either as an activity that all students participate in in class, or as individual sessions with specific students outside of class.

What kinds of materials can be used with upper intermediate and advanced students that focus on the physical production and generate interest? A poem may help students feel the stress patterns and rhythm of English; a short prose reading gives practice in sentence intonation; an excerpt from a speech occasions a focus on phrase intonation, emphasis, or voice quality. A song calls for very careful diction. And tongue

twisters challenge even the teacher's fluency. These activities not only give students the needed practice at the sentence level and beyond, but they also add variety and interest to the class. What follows is an explanation of a few of the activities that have been used successfully with first year foreign language majors at National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan, R.O.C. First, a very brief account of the linguistic content and structure of the course English Pronunciation is given. Second, the use of literature is discussed, including prose writings, poetry, and speeches. Next, the use of songs for pronunciation practice is explained, followed by sections on tongue twisters and cultural materials. Finally, some concluding remarks are made.

Background and Structure of the Course

English pronunciation is a one hour a week, zero credit course that first year foreign language majors are required to take both fall and spring semesters. Students often vary greatly in pronunciation skills, from those with near-native fluency and pronunciation (both overseas Chinese and Taiwan educated) to those whom even their patient teachers have trouble understanding. Yet even those who have mastered all the individual sounds of English often need work with rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns.

Any pronunciation course should have linguistics as its foundation. This is especially crucial for language majors, many of whom will become teachers or do some private English teaching.

Because these students are also required to take the course Introduction to Linguistics their freshman year, I teach the course so that they can apply the phonetic theory of the linguistics class to the applied practice in our pronunciation class.

A typical lesson may go something like this. First I give a brief linguistic explanation of the sound or pair of sounds to be practiced that day. For example, [s] and [z] are both alveolar fricatives produced with a grooved tongue; the former is voiceless, the letter is voiced. We produce both sounds in isolation; at this point I have the whole class alternately hissing and buzzing at me in response to my hissing and buzzing at them. Some Chinese students have trouble with [z], producing instead the affricate [dz] used in Mandarin (Mandarin has [dz] but not [z]) or, occasionally, a kind of retroflex [r] also found in Mandarin in syllable initial position. However, all of them can produce [s], with only a very few occasionally producing a dental [s] before the high front vowel [i], as in Standard Mandarin. Therefore, I teach [z] through [s], sometimes using a very short listening comprehension exercise to see if the students can hear the difference between [z] and [dz].

Then we move on to the exercises in the text (Standard American English, Taipei; most texts follow the same pattern of presentation), which are usually words and phrases and minimal pairs. It is often here where student problems surface, when they have to produce the sound in the environment of other

sounds, when they have to move their tongues from one position to another and change the shape of the oral cavity. Sometimes I put in a short tongue twister (see section on tongue twisters below for details on teaching) at this point, for example for [z]: Zany zebras zip and zoom (from Smalley). I generally only do one tongue twister and then go back to the text. Later in the class I can give them another one, or I can use one to review what we practiced in a previous class.

Part of a class may be spent reciting a poem or singing a song (see the sections on literature and music below) for extra practice beyond the phrase and sentence level. Sometimes this happens to tie in with holidays, as when we practiced [r] just before Christmas and for the final activity that day recited and sang the Christmas song Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

The content of each class depends somewhat on the students. If they are having difficulty with, for example, distinguishing [e] and [ɛ], then we spend more time on them. What is most important is that the students get as much oral practice as possible, the more in connected speech, the better. And fast-paced variety not only keeps the class interested, but it gives students different opportunities to produce difficult sounds or combinations of sounds in a not-too-threatening environment. That is, if the content (the text of the utterance) is already given and if the teacher and other students are busy buzzing and groaning and tripping over tongue twisters, then student errors or slips of the tongue cause minimal loss of face when even the

teacher sometimes gets tongue-tied.

Literature

As has been stated previously, many of our students can produce a word properly in isolation, but they may encounter difficulty in connected speech. These may be problems with consonant clusters at word boundaries (adding [ə]), improper phrase or sentence intonation, or lack of fluency. The only way to overcome these difficulties is with practice at the sentence level or higher. Of course, phrase and sentence level intonation can and should be taught, and there are good texts and tapes available. However, sentences in isolation lose their uniqueness after the point has been taught. So why not have the students practice on real connected speech? And why not make it good English, the English of prose, poetry, and public speaking.

Prose Writers are craftsmen of language, and the best writers produce objects worthy of our experience. Students should get this lesson in their literature classes, but there they most often read with the eyes, not with the ears and the mouth. It is said that there is a certain "mouth set" for each language and that therefore when we speak a new language, we must learn a new set of habits for the mouth, face, nose, and throat muscles. We can use prose readings for that practice. The readings presented in any given textbook may not be sufficient, or some may seem too short or too bland. Therefore, we need to find other sources of material.

I especially like Thurber for the pronunciation class. First of all, many of his fables are short enough to practice in class or to give for homework assignments reading on tape. Second, they tell a complete story simply enough (maybe with a little interpretation from the teacher) in Thurber's cock-eyed way to keep the students interested. And third, they elicit sentence intonation and give fluency practice. Also useful are Advanced Anecdotes in American English and Advanced Stories for Reproduction, both by L.A. Hill; the vocabulary is controlled, but each story is short (about one half page), complete, and humorous. Other teachers may have their own favorites.

I find prose readings extremely useful for individualized homework assignments on tape. (Taiwan is affluent enough that most students either have portable cassette tape recorders or their roommates do; they can also use language lab facilities for recording.) I give the students something to read on tape; the general length is about half a page. I listen to the tape, write down the problems for myself, but give the corrections orally only on tape to each student after his reading. I ask him to repeat certain words or phrases on the next tape and I give the new assignment, which may be different from what other students are assigned. Thus we have a kind of individual running dialogue that goes on between teacher and student outside of class. Assigned readings are good for group evaluation or if the reading has something specific for the student to practice. Student-chosen material is useful in evaluating general comprehensibility; the

teacher does not know ahead of time what the student will say, so student speech must be clear. I tell students that in their future occupations they may have to speak English over the telephone, where there are no visual cues and the sound is distorted, so they might as well practice with me first by means of the tape recorder.

Poetry. Poetry is physical. It must be experienced orally and aurally. What better way to get students to touch language than to have them recite poetry? Moreover, it presents another opportunity for the facial muscles to do calisthenics while the subtle abstract beauties of English may be appreciated.

Take Poe, for example. He uses rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and alliteration in a most obvious way, yet he delights nevertheless. His overstatements are good lessons in the feel of English for the nonnative speaker--they are so easy to observe. The rhyme feels good, the rhythm emphasizes the intonation and stress patterns, the repetition makes for simplicity, and the alliteration challenges fluency. Moreover, not only are the poems physically fun to read, but Poe's ideas are downright weird! Try "Annabel Lee" or "The Bells" or "The Raven" (this longer poem can also be used for the fun of oral interpretation).

Let's take a look at the first stanza of Poe's "Annabel Lee."

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

We can point out the alternating stress of English, explaining the iambic foot and why it is so often used for English (e.g. prepositional phrases: by me, to me, for him, by the name; article or adjective plus noun: a year, the sea, a maiden, this maiden, other thought; infinitive phrase: to love). Also worthy of illustration is the fact that English is stress-timed, not syllable-timed. That is, not every syllable is pronounced in the same length of time. Even the most advanced of students often speak English with a nonnative rhythm. We can show, for example, that iambic meter sometimes has two unstressed syllables instead of one between the stressed syllables, e.g., in a kingdom by the sea. Here in and a are each half the length of -dom or the. It is much like a musical measure, where we can have one quarter note or two eighth notes to fill the position, but the rhythm remains the same. Poems are better than prose for teaching rhythm, at least in the beginning, because the rhythm HAS TO fit. That is, it is fairly obvious when the monotone, slow speaker is out of rhythm. Songs and tongue twisters may also be used to illustrate English stress and rhythm, but songs sometimes distort these to fit the tune. The poem can illustrate further the rhythm and stress lessons the student may have been exposed to previously.

I have a few other favorite poems, for example Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "The Road Not Taken", or "Fire and Ice". T.S. Eliot's "Macavity the Mystery Cat" is great for a program with the readers made up as cats, but the vocabulary is daunting. Generally, shorter poems of a few stanzas are easier to work with in class, both for time and interest, but longer ones can be used with planning. Every spring, the Foreign Language Department at Tsing Hua University has an evening of poetry reading in English. It is open to all students, but all freshman foreign language majors are required to participate, either individually or in groups. They can be as creative as they want in interpretation, delivery, and props. This activity gives students a chance to familiarize themselves with famous poetry (the specific poems are assigned by literature teachers) and an opportunity to show off their English recitation to teachers and classmates.

When using poetry in the pronunciation class, after giving some very brief background information on the author and poem, we usually read the poem line by line, with the students repeating after me. After each stanza brief questions may be asked about content. The students should know what each word means and understand the general meaning of the poem; this is not the place for literary analysis. Our majors take required survey courses on American and English literature during their four years of university study, so they will be dealing with these more famous poems again. After each stanza, I ask a few of the students to

recite it individually, and then we move on to the next stanza, making sure that each student gets a chance to recite at least one stanza. Finally, we recite the whole poem in small groups or individually, taking turns by stanzas.

I believe that each teacher should use the poems that s/he likes best and teach them in any way that gives students maximum time speaking, varying the approach as necessary. Nothing carries over to the students like teacher enthusiasm. After all, the recitation of any work gives us the opportunity to practice (and correct) oral skills, so it might as well be what the participants find most pleasant.

Speeches Teachers may occasionally want students to recite some famous speeches. Indeed, speech contests are very popular in Taiwan, both for Chinese and English, with competition from school level to island-wide level each year. Other private organizations sponsor contests, such as the Taipei Women's Club contest for college freshmen and the Lincoln Society's yearly competition for best recitation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Tsing Hua's second year foreign language majors take two semesters of a required public speaking course, English Speech. Although it is in this latter course that more emphasis is placed on the type of delivery associated with speaking in public, speeches may be used in the pronunciation class from time to time. For example, the lectures and speeches section in Stress and Intonation Part 2 is excellent for showing phrase intonation within connected speech. The texts are presented with stress and pause markings so that

students have a guide in listening to the tape and in their own reading aloud. Students can listen to the tape while following the marked text, then each student can try to recite a sentence while following the text markings. Great American Speeches (text and tapes) provide other examples for classroom listening and practice in using pauses, emphasis, and so on.

Music

As mentioned above, I often have students say or read something onto a cassette tape and submit it to me for more specific analysis of their ability. Once, on one tape, after his reading, a student with somewhat poor pronunciation said that he wanted to sing a song for me. I was surprised, not at the content of that old song, but at that student's near perfect diction when he was singing. There are other students, however, whose pronunciation seems to show no improvement at all when singing. I don't know why this is so. It may be that some students who like to sing have a keener awareness of singing skills, including diction. Can these skills be carried over to speech?

In English, vowels are voiced and are produced with the mouth open and with no obstruction in the oral cavity. This means that vowels are more easily heard and perceived than consonants are. Furthermore, if consonants are mumbled or mispronounced, they are not perceived or they are misperceived. Singing teachers tell us to compensate for this by overpronouncing consonants, especially

finals. That is, we are to enunciate them more distinctly than we would in conversation, where, for example, final stops are typically unreleased and consonant clusters are simplified. Practice in the pronunciation of final consonants is especially important for speakers of Mandarin Chinese, where the only syllable finals are [n] and [ŋ], and in Peking Mandarin [r]. I tell my students that vowels travel farther than consonants and that people don't hear consonants as well, so that they should not mumble. This lesson is of critical importance in public speaking.

If songs are used in the pronunciation class, it probably matters little which specific songs are used. I use some seasonal songs that I like, a Halloween song, a Thanksgiving song, some secular Christmas songs, and so on. A shorter song, or just one verse, with a simple melody is good for in-class pract-ice and makes for a pleasant final activity of a class period. Longer pieces may be used for special purposes. As with poetry, a public performance might serve as the incentive to perfect the diction of a longer song.

There are several ways to teach songs. I generally ask some questions about the holiday or theme (if we haven't already been discussing that topic). Next, I give out the handout, which is often decorated with pictures or drawings to gain interest and emphasize the idea. For example, along with the baseball song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" I've taken a comic strip "Peanuts", with Charlie Brown striking out, illustrating "Strike One, Strike Two, Strike Three, You're Out!" I include the music

with the words because I have found, to my satisfaction, that unlike most Americans of the same age, students in Taiwan can read music and, moreover, they like to sing.

Next I recite each line, explaining or asking students to explain any new vocabulary or meaning. The students as a group repeat each line, and general pronunciation problems are pointed out and corrected at this point. The students may then recite the whole song as a group and/or individual students recite a few lines for practice and for me to listen to and correct their pronunciation. Then I sing the song alone or play a tape recording of the song (I have my Christmas carols recorded to match the handout for parties and sing-alongs). Finally, we all sing together two or three times, gradually bringing the song up to normal tempo.

Finally, a few words of caution in teaching songs. First, the normal spoken patterns of stress and intonation are sometimes sacrificed to fit the rhythm of the song. Ask yourself if this will cause any problems in teaching it. Second, if you have a decent voice and your students like to sing, fine. If you "have a voice like a duck," sing less often and have the students sing along with a recording that is not too fast.

Tongue Twisters

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, how many pecks of pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick? Who cares? Well, no one, really,

especially since in reality we pick raw peppers and pickle them later. The meaning is unimportant. In fact, even the most senseless or ridiculous meaning tongue twisters can be fun.

Probably no teacher would spend a whole hour on tongue twisters, unless possibly for review. I find them rather to be tension breakers, an enjoyable closing activity after a session of intense linguistic practice. First of all, anyone can make a mistake, even the teacher, especially if we try to go faster and faster, so we all laugh together. Second, they are good mouth exercises, both in general and for the specific sounds practiced in that class period. There are some classics, of course, like Peter Piper, but the teacher can make up her own to suit the sound being practiced (e.g. [θ] Thirty thousand thin thieves thundered through the theater last Thursday).

The Dr. Seuss books for children Fox in Socks and Oh Say Can You Say? are good sources for longer, rhymed tongue twisters. For example, do your students have trouble with [r] and [l] after consonants? When they seem to have mastered these combinations in words and phrases, try this one from Fox in Socks (p. 47) for review, showing them the book, too, to get into the spirit of Dr. Seuss as American children do. (This one also has a lot of [z]'s and [i]'s for Chinese students.)

> Through three cheese trees three free fleas flew.
> While these fleas flew, freezy breeze blew.
> Freezy breeze made these three trees freeze.
> Freezy trees made these trees' cheese freeze.
> That's what made these three free fleas sneeze.

After each student tries to recite this one individually without a slip, they may all go straight to the infirmary for tongue fatigue, but even the mumblers will have had to pay close attention to their diction.

Usually, I write the tongue twister on the board, adding key phonetic symbols if necessary, then say it to the class. The class repeats it several times in unison, perhaps in short phrases at first if the utterance is long or the students are having difficulty. Any new words are explained and any mispronounced words in the group are corrected. Then I ask individuals to recite, often calling on them at random, correcting any errors. After everyone has had a chance to recite individually, we try it faster and faster in unison until it breaks down. I may ask individuals to recite as fast as they can. Thus we end the class on a rather silly note, and the students exit laughing. Sometimes during the few minutes after class, the hallways echo with bits of such tongue twisting nonsense. Aha, the students are practicing on their own! (For a list of short tongue twisters, see Appendix A.)

Culture

Pronunciation class can also present an opportunity to teach bits of American culture. Some students may eventually go abroad to graduate school; others may work dealing with other English speakers in their home countries. The pronunciation class should teach the students not only how to say it right, but also how not

to say it wrong.

For example, take the distinction [i] and [ɪ]. Normally, a mispronunciation will be understood in the context, the harbour scene telling the listener ship [šɪp] was intended, the farm scene telling the listener sheep [šip] was intended. However, such errors may elicit a chuckle from the native speaker.

That same [i] and [ɪ] may produce other problems. A Slovenian acquaintance told me of the time she wanted to tell her neighbor "I put clean sheets on the bed." Unfortunately, her sheets [šits] was pronounced [šɪts], giving the meaning "I put clean shits on the bed", clearly not what the speaker intended. To illustrate another possible problem, a drawing (Claire, 1980) shows a man standing in the living room looking at a cake with the mental image of eating it and asking May I take a piece? However, he pronounces [pis] as [pɪs], giving the hostess in the kitchen the mental image of the man standing in front of the toilet! (May I take a piss?) Elizabeth Claire, in Dangerous English (Eardley Press, 1980) offers cartoons for these any many other examples of taboo words in American English, some of which may be inadvertently produced by mispronunciation. While we may not want to teach our students, nor would they want to learn, all the vulgar language of English, we can show them the obvious words to avoid and those sounds that have potential for trouble, such as [i] and [ɪ] for Chinese speakers. And while students might not be too embarrassed by saying ship for sheep, they may be much more motivated to pay attention to the distinction if

they don't want to say shit instead of sheet.

Although the foreign student advisor and some professors on U.S. campuses may be understanding of international students' language difficulties, other Americans may not be so tolerant, and they may even laugh at and be unwilling to make any effort to understand a foreign accent. These are the unfortunate realities of the primarily ethnocentric Americans that our students may have to face.

When Mainland China first started sending students to United States graduate schools, we were faced with many brilliant people who had to make enormous adjustments to American culture. One man was assigned to teach (as teaching assistant) a freshman physics lab. Although his professors lauded his knowledge of physics, his students thought him incompetent. Why? He stood in front of the class with his arms stiffly at his sides, stoop-shouldered, staring at the floor, and mumbling softly. In short, his body language was all wrong. Americans feel that standing up straight, looking someone in the eye, and speaking clearly all indicate confidence and capability. These feelings are below the level of conscious awareness. The students blamed the TA's poor English, when in reality they were also responding to many other cues.

In western cultures, mumbling is generally associated with avoidance or guilt, especially if the eyes are averted at the same time. It seldom conveys humility. Students mumble when they are unsure of the answer, and so on. Soft speech is a strain on a

listener expecting louder speech. Our students need to know how unclear or inaudible speech is perceived so that they can present themselves now and in the future not only as confident English speakers, but as competent employees.

Conclusions

The main point of this paper is that pronunciation class need not be solely a linguistics class nor a session of meaningless repetition. Any English language material may be used for practice, especially if it is meaningful and enjoyable. For example, I have not mentioned the use of structured conversations because our first year students get a lot of practice with them in language lab class and find them boring in other classes. Therefore, I do not use them very often, except when we work on question intonation. While we cannot please all the students all the time, variety is more likely to keep things interesting for both teacher and students.

Of course, each teacher must choose material that suits her class; for example, one cannot always use the same activities with children as with adult professionals. The materials I have mentioned work for my students--college freshmen, mostly female. When I give them a poem I can tell them they will learn more about the writer in literature class. When I have them recite parts of famous speeches, I can tell them they will need clear diction for sophomore speech. When I give phonetic description,

I can tell them they need to know this for their General Linguistics course, too. And because many of Taiwan's freshmen are not long out of childhood, they enjoy singing and silly tongue twisters. In short, it all fits. Other teachers should also choose materials they think their students might enjoy without them seeming too simple and childish or difficult and obscure. For example, would a class of older businessmen enjoy tongue twisters or would they be insulted? On the other hand, poems that are fairly opaque in meaning with archaic vocabulary and syntax might only cause students frustration. Poems that are fairly transparent in meaning with little or no archaic vocabulary or syntax are best. So, if we have the opportunity, knowing a little of the background of our students in addition to their language level can indeed be useful.

One of the questions I have asked myself when I assign students to read a passage on tape is whether I'm testing pronunciation or whether I'm testing reading ability. While this might pose a serious problem to a research study, I've come to think it matters little in the teaching situation as long as we don't include specialized vocabulary without teaching it first. Those students who stumble over a reading that other students produce with very little difficulty are almost always those with poor pronunciation and intonation patterns. If they cannot read a passage fluently after going over it in class and practicing it as many times as they want before recording it, then they surely need all the help and practice in speaking English that they can

get.

One day I asked a student in the Chemistry Department who had never lived abroad why her English was so good. She said that all through junior and senior high school she often read aloud in her leisure time. Since then, other good students have given me the same answer. Unfortunately, junior and senior high school English classes are often too large for students to get much individual oral practice, yet we cannot really learn to speak a language without speaking it. And we cannot learn good pronunciation and intonation habits without practice. The more, the better. Therefore, in our pronunciation course, we read, repeat, and recite as often and as much and with as many different texts as we can. I believe that it is only by this patient and persistent practice that pronunciation will be perfected.

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APPENDIX A

Tongue Twisters for Classroom Use

1. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. (If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, how many pecks of pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?)

2. How much wood could a woodchuck shuck if a woodchuck could shuck wood?

3. Sister Sue sits sewing socks for seasick suffering sailors. (from Smalley)

4. Zany zebras zip and zoom. (from Smalley)

5. Please send these zebras to those zoos in the amusement zones along this zigzag path. (adapted from Standard American English Pronunciation)

6. She sells sea shells by the seashore. The shells she sells are sea shells.

7. Thirty thousand thin thieves thundered through the theater last Thursday.

8. Thelma Thatcher thought that those thirty three thousand three hundred and thirty three thistles seemed silly.

9. Park your car in Harvard Yard.

10. It made me laugh to see a calf go down the path a mile and a half to take a bath. (adapted from Smalley)

11. Henry, age eight, etched the letter H on the edge of the desk.

12. Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals ran.

13. Ruthless Rosie revels in reading raunchy prose.

14. Little Larry likes Lucy's leather luggage.

15. Shapely Suzie sings a short song while suffering sailors sit shining shoes.

16. Is this the path that passes to the south of the house?

17. Billy Baxter bit a bitter bite of Betty Botter's bitter butter biscuit.

18. Please ask the pretty black and brown crows to take off their glowing blue and green clothes and put on red and yellow robes.

19. The black brow of the brown cow glowed green in the playful prison.

20. Betty Botter bought some butter
"But", she said, "this butter's bitter.
If I put it in my batter,
It will make my batter bitter."
So she bought some better butter,
Better than the bitter butter,
And she put it in her batter,
And it made her batter better. (source unknown)